

## THE POTTERY INDUSTRIES OF THE ROMAN EAST

What was the social experience of work in the ancient world? In this study, Elizabeth Murphy approaches this question through the lens offered by a particular set of workers, the potters and ceramicists in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. Her research draws on the rich and growing dataset of workshops and production evidence from the Roman East and raises awareness of the unique features of this particular craft in this region over several centuries. Highlighting the multifaceted working experience of professionals through a theoretically informed framework, Murphy reconstructs the complex lives of people in the past and demonstrates the importance of studying work and labor as central topics in social and cultural histories. Her research draws from the fields of archaeology, social history, and anthropology and applies current social theories – communities of practice, technological choices, *chaîne opératoire*, cultural hybridity, *tasks-capes* – to interpret and offer new insights into the archaeological remains of workshops and ceramics.

Elizabeth A. Murphy is Assistant Professor of Classics at Florida State University. Her research focuses on the crafts- and trades-people of the Roman and Late Antique worlds and uses the archaeological record to gain insight into the social lives and practices of working communities in antiquity.

# THE POTTERY INDUSTRIES OF THE ROMAN EAST

CRAFT COMMUNITIES AND  
WORKING PRACTICES

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*To my father*

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xv
1 INTRODUCTION	I
2 WORKSHOPS: MODELS VERSUS PRACTICE	24
3 PROCESS, PEOPLE, AND WORKING CONDITIONS	54
4 CULTURAL PRACTICES AND RITUAL LIVES OF POTTERS IN THE WORKSHOP	77
5 POTTING TRADITIONS, CRAFT LEARNING, AND PRODUCT INNOVATION	97
6 SOCIALLY EMBEDDED TECHNOLOGIES AND LOCAL TECHNOLOGICAL STYLES	116
7 INTERNAL SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF INDUSTRY CLUSTERS: COOPERATION AND COMPETITION	140
8 URBAN INDUSTRY, TOPOGRAPHIES, AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS	169
9 CRAFTING COMMUNITIES: SOME FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE SOCIAL EXPERIENCE OF ROMAN WORKSHOPS	195
<i>Glossary of Specialized Potting Terms</i>	201
<i>Bibliography</i>	203
<i>Index</i>	237

FIGURES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION		
1	Map of sites described in the text.	<i>page</i> 19
CHAPTER 2. WORKSHOPS: MODELS VERSUS PRACTICE		
2	Plan of Sagalassos East Slope Tableware Workshop.	26
3	Plan of Dura-Europos Workshop 1.	28
4	Plan of Dura-Europos Workshop 2.	28
5	Plan of Jerusalem <i>Legio X Fretensis</i> Kilnworks.	35
6	Plans of workshops described in the text representing variability in size and spatial organization.	36
7	Plan of Ketios Valley Workshop 2.	37
8	Plan of Ketios Valley Workshop 3.	41
9	Plan of Ketios Valley Workshop 4.	41
10	Photo of repurposed pottery kiln used for lime burning.	46
11	Photo of modern exploitation of Çanaklı clay beds.	52
CHAPTER 3. PROCESS, PEOPLE, AND WORKING CONDITIONS		
12	Plan of Sagalassos Molded-Wares Workshop Complex, SW Unit.	60
13	Gaza Jar kiln complex reconstruction.	71
CHAPTER 4. CULTURAL PRACTICES AND RITUAL LIVES OF POTTERS IN THE WORKSHOP		
14	Photo of cooking hearth found in the corner of the Sagalassos Molded-Wares Workshop Complex, SW Unit.	79
15	Photo of the stack of bowls found in the Sagalassos East Slope Tableware Workshop.	80
16	Photo of a potter’s rib (scraper tool) with part of an inscribed name found in the workshop areas of Sagalassos.	83
17	Photo of a potter’s rib (scraper tool) inscribed with Christian symbols and found in the workshop areas of Sagalassos.	93

CHAPTER 5. POTTING TRADITIONS, CRAFT LEARNING, AND PRODUCT INNOVATION	
18	Photo of Dionysos statue found in the Upper Agora of Sagalassos and relief decoration with a similar image on Sagalassos Red Slip ware platter manufactured in the city’s workshops. 108
19	Sagalassos Red Slip ware form 1F150 demonstrating change in size over time, from a small cup to a large basin. 112
20	Sagalassos Red Slip ware form 1C181 shape alongside 1B220, 1C180, 1C140. 113
CHAPTER 6. SOCIALLY EMBEDDED TECHNOLOGIES AND LOCAL TECHNOLOGICAL STYLES	
21	Photo of Sagalassos saggar reconstruction with a coarse ware basin containing table wares. 122
22	Reconstruction of a kiln found at Buto (Egypt) with the side flue. 125
23	Plan of legionary kiln battery in Jerusalem (Israel). 127
24	Sagalassos fast-turning wheel components and reconstruction and slow-turning wheel components and reconstruction. 136
CHAPTER 7. INTERNAL SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF INDUSTRY CLUSTERS: COOPERATION AND COMPETITION	
25	Photo of stamp and matching stamp impression on mold found in the Molded-Wares Workshop Complex at Sagalassos. 148
26	Product repertoire and the frequencies of tableware forms thought to have been manufactured at different production sites near the Kestros River (Turkey). 161
27	Repertoire of the East Slope Tableware Workshop at Sagalassos. 164

TABLES

CHAPTER 2. WORKSHOPS: MODELS VERSUS PRACTICE

1	Workshop size estimations.	<i>page 27</i>
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CHAPTER 3. PROCESS, PEOPLE, AND WORKING CONDITIONS

2	Variable operational sequences of similar molded vessels manufactured at different Egyptian production sites.	56
3	Listing of kiln attributes represented in eastern Mediterranean workshops.	67

CHAPTER 8. URBAN INDUSTRY, TOPGRAPHIES,  
AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

4	List of different modes of marketing pottery.	181
5	Recommended distances between built structures and pottery kilns.	185



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ABBREVIATIONS

ARS	African Red Slip
CBM	ceramic building material
CRS	Cypriot Red Slip
ESA	Eastern Sigillata A
ESB	Eastern Sigillata B
ESC	Eastern Sigillata C
ESD	Eastern Sigillata D
GTS	Gallic Terra Sigillata
ITS	Italian Terra Sigillata
LRD	Late Roman D
MASL	meters above sea level
SRA	Service Régional de l’Archéologie
SRSW	Sagalassos Red Slip ware